

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01657 01 OF 02 241628Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-20 ACDA-12 OES-07 DOE-15 SOE-02 OMB-01 NEA-11
MCT-01 SSM-05 EA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00 /162 W
-----102628 241655Z /42

R 241606Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0577
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 01657

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EI
SUBJECT: FINE GAEL ANNUAL CONVENTION (ARD FHEIS)

SUMMARY: THE FINE GAEL ARD FHEIS WAS A REMARKABLY
ENTHUSIASTIC SUCCESSFUL AFFAIR FOR A PARTY WHICH SUFFERED
SUCH A CRUSHING DEFEAT LAST YEAR. HIGH MARKS GO TO
NEW PARTY LEADER GARRET FITZGERALD WHO TURNED IN A
BRAVURA PERFORMANCE. HE IS ATTEMPTING TO REORIENT HIS
PARTY, GOING AFTER THE SWING VOTES (YOUTH, LABOR, WOMEN,
ETC.) WHILE STILL MAINTAINING THE TRADITIONAL FINE GAEL
SUPPORT. ROUND ONE WAS A SUCCESS, BUT IT IS A LONG
TIME UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE LARGER OF IRELAND'S TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES,
FINE GAEL, LAST WEEKEND HELD ITS FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION
SINCE ITS CRUSHING DEFEAT AND FALL FROM POWER LAST YEAR.
THE EVENT WAS A PERSONAL TRIUMPH FOR NEW LEADER GARRET
FITZGERALD AND QUITE AN UPBEAT AFFAIR. FITZGERALD IS
GAMBLING UPON A REVOLUTION IN HIS PARTY, AND IN IRISH
POLITICS, TO BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE TIME OF THE NEXT
ELECTION. THIS ARD FHEIS WAS PHASE ONE OF THE PLAN.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 DUBLIN 01657 01 OF 02 241628Z

2. THE CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS CONVENTIONS WAS STRIKING.
OF OLD FINE GAEL WOULD MEET WITH FEW DELEGATES IN A
SMALL HALL, RAM THROUGH A BRIEF AND NON-CONTENTIOUS
SET OF RESOLUTIONS, POLITELY APPLAUD LIAM COSGRAVE'S
ORACULAR WORDS, AND GO HOME. NO VISITORS WERE EVEN
INVITED. THIS YEAR IRELAND'S LARGEST HALL, THE ROYAL

DUBLIN SOCIETY, WAS FILLED WITH 5000 ENTHUSIASTIC DELEGATES. A NEW PARTY CONSTITUTION WAS HOTLY DEBATED, AND PASSED, WHICH GIVES CONSIDERABLE MORE CONTROL TO THE GRASS ROOTS. ORGANIZATION OF THE BIG MEETING -- SPLIT INTO THREE PARTS AT TIMES IN ORDER TO HANDLE MORE RESOLUTIONS -- WAS SMOOTH AND EFFORTLESS. MANY VISITORS WERE INVITED, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. THE DUO OF NEW PARTY SECRETARY PETER PRENDERGAST AND NEW PRESS SECRETARY TED NEALON HAVE LEARNED WELL THEIR LESSONS FROM THEIR FIANNA FAIL MASTERS, AND AT LEAST ORGANIZATIONALLY FINE GAEL HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED A RESOLUTION.

3. FITZGERALD'S SPEECH, THE MAJOR EVENT, WAS AN ARTFUL BLEND OF PARTISAN PEP-TALK AND SUBSTANTIVE POLICY SUMMARY. UPON RE-READING THE SPEECH, HE WAS CAREFUL NOT TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO RIGID POSITION. IT IS ALL STILL RATHER GENERAL AND VAGUELY CONSERVATIVE, THOUGH THERE ARE HINTS OF RE-ORIENTATION TOWARD POLICIES WHICH WILL APPEAL TO THE YOUTH, I.E. MORE SOCIAL REFORM. ON NORTHERN IRELAND FITZGERALD DENIED THAT HIS PARTY HAD CHANGED POLICY TO GET CLOSER TO THE FIANNA FAIL (GOVERNING PARTY) POSITION, BUT IT WAS RATHER THAT FIANNA FAIL WAS TRYING TO GET OFF ITS "COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW" HOOK AND MOVE CLOSER TO FINE GAEL, WHOSE POLICY REMAINS SUPPORT OF "A UNITED IRELAND ACHIEVED BY CONSENT." HE FURTHER SAID: "WHAT WE MEAN BY IRISH UNITY
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 DUBLIN 01657 01 OF 02 241628Z

IS A FEDERATION OR CONFEDERATION OF IRELAND, INCLUDING A POOLING OF OUR JOINT RESOURCES, NORTH AND SOUTH." ALTHOUGH MENTIONING IT IN A HISTORICAL REVIEW, FITZGERALD DID NOT STRESS "POWER SHARING" AS A MAIN POLICY PLANK.

4. PERHAPS THE MOST NOTICEABLE PART OF THE SPEECH WAS A STRONG PITCH TOWARD WOMEN AND YOUTH. HE FRANKLY ADMITTED THE PARTY'S FAILURE IN THE PAST -- THERE WAS, FOR INSTANCE, ONLY ONE WOMAN IN THE LEADERSHIP SITTING ON THE PODIUM -- BUT PLEDGED TO WORK HARD TO CHANGE THE SITUATION.

5. THE CONFERENCE PASSED A NUMBER OF RESOLUTIONS OF INTEREST, INCLUDING:

A. FAVORING OF HOLDING A REFERENDUM ON DIVORCE (NOW PROHIBITED BY THE CONSTITUTION). THE VOTE WAS CLOSE ON THIS ONE AND MANY OBSERVERS SAID IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN ANYTIME SOON.

B. REAFFIRMING THE RIGHT OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO CHOOSE THE VARIOUS METHODS OF FAMILY PLANNING (COMMENT: THIS

WAS SO DELICATELY PHRASED, AND DEBATED, THAT THE ATTITUDE TO LEGALIZATION OF CONTRACEPTIVES IS STILL UNCLEAR).

C. A RESOLUTION FAVORING BUILDING A NUCLEAR POWER STATION WAS DEFEATED, AS SUGGESTED BY PARTY LEADERSHIP, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE ISSUE HAD NOT BEEN THOROUGHLY EXPLORED.

D. A METHOD FOR CHOOSING CANDIDATES FOR NEXT YEAR'S EUROPARLIAMENT ELECTIONS WAS DECIDED UPON -- IT WILL BE DONE BY A REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION.

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 DUBLIN 01657 02 OF 02 241624Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-20 ACDA-12 OES-07 DOE-15 SOE-02 OMB-01 NEA-11
MCT-01 SSM-05 EA-12 HA-05 TRSE-00 /162 W
-----102533 241654Z /42

R 241606Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0578
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 DUBLIN 01657

E. MIDDLE EAST -- AT THE SUGGESTION OF SHADOW FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN RICHIE RYAN, A REFERENCE IN A GENERAL MIDDLE EAST RESOLUTION TO INCLUSION OF THE PLO IN NEGOTIATIONS WAS DROPPED. RYAN EXCORIATED THE PLO AS A "PARAMILITARY AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATION."

F. A RESOLUTION FAVORING TAKING IN OF A SMALL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WAS PASSED.
6. COMMENT: BY ANY STANDARDS THIS ARD FHEIS WAS A SUCCESSFUL ONE-MAN SHOW, AND HAS BOOSTED BOTH THE MORALE OF FINE GAEIL AND ITS CHANCES FOR A POLITICAL COMEBACK. FITZGERALD IS CAUTIOUSLY MOVING HIS PARTY TOWARD A NEW ELECTORATE, AND HOPING TO MAINTAIN THE OLD CONSTITUENCY AT THE SAME TIME. SO FAR IT LOOKS LIKE A GAMBLE WITH GOOD ODDS, BUT IT IS A LONG TIME UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION.
SHANNON

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY STRENGTH, PARTY MEETINGS, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DUBLIN01657
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780219-0237
Format: TEL
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780525/aaaaauyk.tel
Line Count: 169
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 186ac397-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2592441
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FINE GAEL ANNUAL CONVENTION (ARD FHEIS) SUMMARY: THE FINE GAEL ARD FHEIS WAS A REMARKABLY ENTHUSIASTIC SUCCESSFUL AFFAIR FOR A PARTY WHICH S
TAGS: PINT, EI, ARD FHEIS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/186ac397-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014